

Security Informatics and Law Enforcement

Series editor

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Editor's Note:

The primary objective of this book series is to explore contemporary issues related to law enforcement agencies, security services and industries dealing with security related challenges (e.g., government organizations, financial sector insurance companies and internet service providers) from an engineering and computer science perspective. Each book in the series provides a handbook style practical guide to one of the following security challenges:

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Big Data Analytics, Situational Awareness and OSINT- Provides unique insight for computer scientists as well as practitioners in security and policing domains on big data possibilities and challenges for the security domain, current and best practices as well as recommendations.

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Social Media in Crisis Management – explores how social media enables citizens to empower themselves during a crisis, from terrorism, public disorder, and natural disasters

Law enforcement, Counterterrorism, and Anti-Trafficking – Presents tools from those designing the computing and engineering techniques, architecture or policies related to applications confronting radicalisation, terrorism, and trafficking.

The books pertain to engineers working in law enforcement and researchers who are researching on capabilities of LEAs, though the series is truly multidisciplinary – each book will have hard core computer science, application of ICT in security and security / policing domain chapters. The books strike a balance between theory and practice.

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Babak Akhgar • Petra Saskia Bayerl
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Editors

Social Media Strategy in Policing

From Cultural Intelligence to Community Policing

 Springer

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Dedicated to Aryan H. Akhgar *You are always in our hearts*

PREFACE

Context-sensitive and timely intelligence sharing is the cornerstone of modern-day policing. Social media can be a rich source of data that, with relevant and appropriate processing and analysis, can turn into actionable intelligence. The relevance of social media is hard to overstate, now they have become an integral part of our communication. More people today receive their news over social media, for instance, than over traditional news outlets.

In line with their increasing relevance, police forces across the world have established a firm foot in social media—be it in global networks such as Twitter, YouTube or Facebook or other more local variations. These platforms offer efficient access to citizens and have been credited with improving police-citizen relations as well as helping in preventing and solving crimes. At the same time, effects of ‘filter bubbles’, ‘fake news’ and polarisation become increasingly apparent.

Whether social media are ‘a force for good or bad’ is not a question we can and want to answer. In contrast, in which way police forces can and should use social media and how they can support police work is a question that interests us both as professionals and as citizens.

Our motivation for this book is to highlight the role of social media for policing today. Our authors do so—deliberately—from a wide variety of angles: conceptually and strategically as well as in terms of technologies and specific areas of applications.

Social media phenomena have become an integral part of our societies. Police forces thus need to adapt their strategies to embrace and exploit the information on social media platforms for the safety and security of

citizens. This book is driven by the belief that police forces' social media strategies need to address the 'softer issues' (such as accounting for a new orientation towards citizens—now also referred to as 'customers' or 'clients', addressing increasingly culturally diverse communities or handling increasing requests for online anonymity) as well as the 'harder issues' of technologies, analytical methods and applications. Social media moreover confront police forces with new challenges such as digital vigilantism. Vigilantism is not a new phenomenon, but social media have certainly provided additional powerful tools for citizens to 'take justice into their own hands'.

Our authors provide hands-on advice and describe concrete applications for a diverse set of law enforcement issues: from crime prevention, identification and reporting to community policing and citizen engagement. By themselves or in combination with other datasets, social media provide law enforcement with rich sources of information, as well as additional channels to engage with citizens. Social media are no longer 'new media', and their strategic as well as practical value for law enforcement is undoubted.

We hope that this book will provide our readers with both the conceptual and practical knowledge and the inspiration to employ social media in new and effective ways.

Sheffield, UK
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Athens, Greece

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Petra Saskia Bayerl
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